

**FLOWERING LOCUS T (FT) AND GENETICALLY MODIFIED PLANTS HAVING  
DELAYED FLOWER DEVELOPMENT**

**ABSTRACT**

The present invention provides a gene, termed "FT" for flowering locus T, and a polypeptide encoded by FT that modulates flower development in plants. FT is useful in methods of the invention for producing genetically modified plants characterized as having the phenotypic trait of modulated flower development, for example early or delayed flowering. Such plants can be genetically modified by nucleic acids encoding functional FT peptides; at least one antisense nucleic acid for FT; a structural gene that encodes wild-type FT polypeptide; or a structural gene that encodes dominant negative polypeptides, for example, in order to modulate flowering in the plant.